

Figure 4.20. Drawing of pit kiln 2 (14n30e).

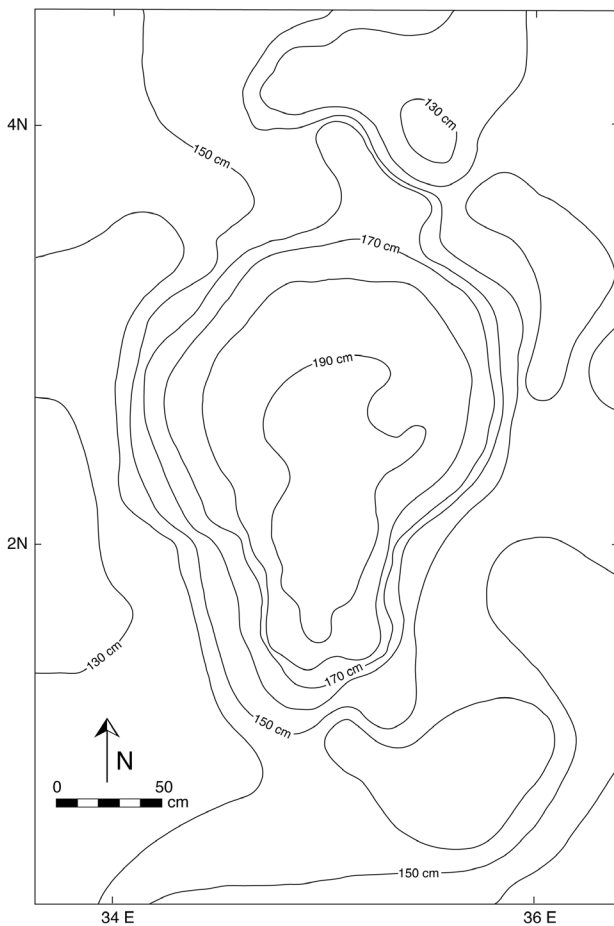


Figure 4.21. Drawing of pit kiln 1 (2n34e).

3 that appears to have been cleaned out of the pit kiln and deposited nearby in preparation for a new episode of firing (Figure 4.30).

The firing feature under the house floor varied in certain key respects from the pit kilns north of the structure (see Figure 4.21). In part, the feature below the house had a different use life, curtailed and truncated by construction of the residential structure, which sealed the pit and led



Figure 4.22. Large broken ceramic vessels and ash on the floor of pit kiln 4 (18n24e).

to better preservation. Other variations may relate to slight differences in design. Like the other firing pits, the subfloor feature was carved into the bedrock and contained high densities of ash, wasters, and potsherds. In contrast, though, the subfloor kiln had greater numbers of cobble-sized stones and unusually large pieces of charcoal (Figure 4.31). Many of the cobbles were spalled, covered in soot, and otherwise discolored from burning (Figure 4.32). Some of these stones had been purposefully placed into low spots in the bedrock, defining the edge of the pit-firing depression. This pit kiln also had the best-defined and most distinctive firepit (Figure 4.33). Although the subfloor kiln may have been more formally designed and possibly was built partly of stone, it may simply be better preserved, as construction of the house prevented further perturbation of the feature. In contrast, the other pit kilns appear to have been in use longer, either sequentially or simultaneously, and were subjected to more and greater post-use disturbances.

4.4. Dense Midden with Shell and Other Craft and Utilitarian Debris

The densest midden deposits were in the northwestern part of the excavated area (the north block of units excavated in 1991), north of the structure, where we encountered high concentrations of cut marine shell, broken ceramic vessels, chipped stone tools and debris, and other domestic garbage overlaying pit kiln 4 in 18n24e and adjacent units (Figure 4.34). These dense deposits extended beyond the limits of our excavation to the north and west. The midden with shell debris spread south to pit kiln 2 in unit 14n30e, and although there was much broken pottery in the deposits above the pit kiln, the quantity of shell was lower there (Figure 4.35). Shell debris was very dispersed elsewhere, including in levels above the pit kilns to the east (16n34e [#3] and 14n36e [#5]) and in and above the preserved floors of the house and exterior middens. Shell debris was especially sparse in deposits under the house. A key point is that although these middens were laden with debris from craft activities, those materials were intermixed with



Figure 4.23. Ashy layer filled with broken ceramics in pit kiln 2 (14n30e).



Figure 4.24. Pit kiln 4 (18n24e) completely excavated.

domestic refuse, including ash, animal bone, and broken ceramics that were likely not locally made. The mixing of these different classes of debris in middens proximate to the residence link craft production of several distinct materials with the deposition of refuse from domestic life (Beck and Hill 2004).

4.5. Dating the House and Associated Activities

The bulk of the pottery recovered during the Ejutla excavations comprises gris (gray) and café (brown) paste vessels that typify the Classic period (Monte Albán III–IV; see Table 1.1) ceramic complex in the